

The Samarpana Program of Devotion

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1. INTRODUCTION

An overview of the history of the mankind indicates a continuous on-going dilemma or a search - which is that magic switch, which when pressed drives a person to get involved in good activities or detaches oneself from crimes / evils ? Many religions have arrived, are there or are extinct now. Many political systems of ruling have come into existence, are there or have been abandoned. But the search still seems on. On the whole, there is no one switch which is universally effective. Various switches work effectively in case of various persons or their groups. Let's see them at a glance.

- 1) Genetic traits – Infants of a crocodile or a turtle, coming out of an egg laid underground on the bank of a river or a seashore, have built-in skill to dodge predator birds/animals & manage to run towards water and start swimming there. We human beings also can have some such built-in skills.
- 2) Training – After undergoing rigorous training in fitness exercises / yoga / karate / cooking / dance etc., the die-hard pupils keep on doing it regularly thro' out their life. Wild elephants are often trained to transport wooden logs / planks.
- 3) Reward or Penalty – The people / servants / students / children are motivated positively by their rulers / masters / teachers / parents by means of rewards/gifts & are threatened of dire consequences in case they are found guilty, thereby discouraging them in doing so. The attractive advertisements of discounts or free offers motivate consumers for shopping.
- 4) Convincing or Dividing – The rulers / masters / teachers / parents in turn are made to do the task by convincing & pampering/boasting them that they are quite unlike the other ordinary ones.
- 5) Fulfilling the essential needs – In each species of animals and birds, the male & female share the tasks of getting the essentials to survive i.e. food, clothing, shelter, etc. Daily they keep themselves occupied in these activities.

The communism / socialism failed on this account. It started with Convincing but later lost its appeal. For some time it survived on Penalty but then fearless people unanimously made a revolt & opted for democracy in many parts of the world.

- 6) Competition – The open market economy leads to globalization & cut-throat competition. Every manufacturer remains busy day & night with all his energy in order to survive.
- 7) Oath / Initiation – In a democracy, Ministers, MPs & MLAs, Army & Police officers, Judges, etc. take an oath while taking charge. Some professionals like doctors also take such an oath. While on duty, they are expected to behave in line with their dignity. They should be faithful & should not deviate. However in reality we often find that all depends on how sincere a person is. Insincere ones keep on changing their sides & faiths to serve their own interests.

Our Brahmasambandha Diksha is also such an oath. In ancient times, the Lord, the Guru & the Vaishnava disciple all 3 used to get busy after the Diksha, in accepting-teaching-doing Seva respectively. But these days after the Diksha the Guru continues touring with his Lord & Vaishnavas come back to home with a kanthi in neck, after offering Bhet. All 3 just switch-off !

- 8) Rest & Recreation – Monotonous work leads to fatigue. Taking periodical rest or leave or getting engaged in hobbies brings freshness.
- 9) Curiosity / Novelty & Monotony – I am so fed up watching TV advertisements since last 35 years stating the soap as new Lux that no curiosity is left now.

Anyway, these were some mundane magic switches. Now let us see those stated in the scriptures.

- 10) Knowledge acquired from Scriptures – According to Vatsyayana, scriptures are useful for creating interest in their fields. There are scriptures in every field – dance, music, drama, sculpture, religion, philosophy, morality, devotion, etc. By reading them affectionately, one can enjoy their company & start those creative activities by obeying the rules stated therein. An interest thus generated by reading scriptures at an advanced stage may make the scriptures redundant, he says.

There are 2 types of beliefs prevailing in India regarding such a motivation from scriptures. On one hand, the Mimansakas & Shankaras believe that divine scriptures have inherent divine capacity to motivate an eligible reader such that he immediately starts practicing the discourses of Karma or acquires enlightenment of the divine knowledge. However this in nothing but an excess of their faith towards scriptures. Shri Mahaprabhuji on the other end follows the Gita's statement that by reading scriptures a person only comes to know what is appropriate for him to do now & what is not. A person is free at his will to do or not do something. Some person may start an activity after reading once while some remain idle even after reading scriptures no. of times.

- 11) Antaryamin – According to Gita & other Upanishadas, God from within directs the souls towards good or evil. The souls often unknowingly follow His directions.
- 12) His Grace or Choice – The Upanishadas state that God by His grace chooses individual souls to become His devotees following various routes. An individual follows a route chosen for him by His grace & reaches his destiny.
- 13) Knowledge of His divinity – Souls falling in categories of gods – humans – demons, etc. all bow down to Him once they acquire knowledge of His divinity. They then become focused towards Him.
- 14) Company of great devotees – Just like a dry cloth gets wetted when it comes in contact with a thoroughly wet cloth, the company of a thorough devotee generates interest among his novice companions. Such thorough devotees often set trends or waves in the society which flourish & immerse those found along.
- 15) Bare emotion – The Bhagavata Puranam is a unique scripture in the religious literature of the entire world. It profoundly states that whether your emotion is a noble one as per the society's standards like love or a condemned one like fear / anger / hatred, if it is an intense one towards Him, it can take you right upto Him. This principle has been supported by numerous elaborated examples like that of Gopis, Kansa, Shishupala, etc. However these are exceptional cases revealing His might. This principle is established mainly in His Leelas during an incarnation. In other periods it is a rare event.

Out of these various magic switches, our sect emphasizes on Mahatmyagyana & Sneha i.e. Knowledge of His divinity & Love on part of the disciples. In order to let the devotional spirit comprising of this knowledge and love grow, a program involving daily activity of dedication = Samarpana, popularly known as Seva, has been prescribed. The same shall be discussed later.

Currently our sect is passing through a decisive phase. People from within & outside criticize this program of devotion & hold it responsible for the present sorry figure of the sect. Some say it is not appealing to NRIs while others say it is not appealing to youngsters. Some find it as if an obstacle in growing business contacts while others in growing social relationships. Some blame it as a hurdle in creating organizations in our sect. Some find it as an activity causing wastage of time, money & energy.

In order to remove such an obstacle, some suggest to trim it down such that it can be wrapped up in ten minutes. Others want it to be made adjustable such that it can be done only in weekends. Some wholesale & retails traders of readymade devotion propose an option of watching a video clip / DVD of all 8 darshans, or visiting a public temple where so called worship is performed by salaried staff. Some fertile ones impressed by popularity of Buddhist Lamas recommend an option of meditation instead.

Who knows what shall be appealing to whom & what shall not ? At the most a spouse can judge ! I opine that before adopting such thoughtless options hastily, we should calmly understand the usefulness of this Samarpana Program in devotion. After all, it has been prescribed by our Acharyas as directed by the Lord Himself. In Gujarati there is a saying – an Aunty can be called Uncle only if she grows moustaches ! Likewise these options can be adopted only if they are as useful in devotion as the program of Samarpana.

Hereafter I have proved how appropriate Samarpana is in modern as well as Indian context. But then even if some so called follower / scholar / guru does not want to adhere to it, I hereby request them to quit our sect. Because sincere disobedience is better than insincere obedience.

2. MODERN CONTEXT – NEUROSCIENCE, M.I. THEORY, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

1. Neuroscience has grown leaps & bounds in last 50 years. Now various procedures are used for studying the human brain, quite unlike the old times when a brain of a dead man & that of an elephant or a monkey were dissected and chemically analyzed. Functional neuro-imaging techniques like a MRI scan or a PET (Positron Emission Tomography) can capture activities of brain live. Some other methods of study focus on persons who turned disable in hearing or vision, etc. on account of an accidental injury to some part of the brain. Study of brain tumors also provides some useful information. Another way of study is by comparing the neural network of the brain to a computer network.
2. Each of these techniques however have their own limitations. Brain is so amazing that it can't be easily understood. Even ancient Indian-Greek-Egyptian-Chinese thinkers applied their brain a lot to understand brain.

For example, the brain's speed of recognizing figures is 100 trillion instructions per second i.e. teraflops. So speedy PCs shall be developed hopefully by 2030 only ! But then the comparison ends here, as the neural circuit of brain is not a digital one operating on binary 0-1 codes as in the PCs. It is unknown to date. The day it will be known, a revolution may start in making PCs.

3. The interim conclusions till now are as under –
 - (i) The brain controls our nervous system. Involuntary activities like respiration, digestion, heart-beats, etc. as well as thinking, imagination, memory, etc. advanced functions are under its control.
 - (ii) A human brain functions in a way similar to that of other animals. Only difference being the proportion of mass of the brain to that of the entire body is high in humans. Also it is a bit more complicated & has denser network.
 - (iii) A child's brain consumes 60% of the energy of the entire body while in case of elders it is 20%. The heat generated during this consumption can damage the brain if not removed. So the brain has a built-in mechanism for heat control similar to a thermostat.
 - (iv) A male's brain weighs around 1 to 1.5 kg. Though it is around 100 gm more than that of female's, their proportion to weight of the body is the same in male & female.
 - (v) Brain is very soft jelly like dark red substance. It is divided in left & right hemispheres. The capacity to control most of the body functions is distributed in both hemispheres. Exceptionally some functions like speech is controlled by a specific portion in one hemisphere. However the brain has an amazing ability such that if in the childhood a particular portion of the brain gets injured, its task is partially or fully performed by some other portion in the other hemisphere on its own at a later age !
 - (vi) At any one instant, only 10% of the brain is active. If the entire 100% start working at once, it shall stop immediately. This 10% utilization balances energy & heat. A foolish person requires higher brain activity for a particular task than an intelligent one's brain.
 - (vii) The mankind since ancient times is crazy about getting more intelligent, just like getting beautiful, strong, young, sexy. So ever since people are cheated by selling proprietary medicines that enhance intelligence. Apart from medicines, procedures like hypnotism or surgery, etc. are also popular. But none of them seems useful. The ability of brain to acquire knowledge definitely increases by reading-studying-thinking regularly, but the sum of all the ability remains the same. The jokes of absent minded professors are not uncommon !
 - (viii) A shocking finding is that all the centers related to sensing or expressing our emotions are in the brain only ; our heart has nothing to do with the emotions ! However agnostics & god-believers, poets & scholars, VIPs & ordinary ones all of us believe that emotions are within the heart & not within the brain. Let us wait for more research in this regard.
4. In 1983, Dr. Howard Gardner of Harvard University presented MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE THEORY or MI theory based on neuroscience. In his opinion, the popular IQ tests determine quite limited capacity of the brain. Till then, in education & social arena, only capacities related to language & logic/mathematics were considered as intelligence. Other abilities were classified as skill / expertise / mastery. But Dr. Gardner considered them also as a type of intelligence. He proposed 8 types of intelligence –
 - (i) Linguistic Intelligence – People having command over written &/or spoken language like scholars, poets, speakers, leaders, advocates, politicians are considered having this ability in abundance.
 - (ii) Logical Intelligence – Mathematicians, scientists, lawyers, detectives, doctors, etc. have this ability to solve puzzles by thinking step by step.
 - (iii) Spatial Intelligence – Painters, Sculptors, architects, designers, decorators, etc. have this exceptional ability to materialize abstract mental shapes & figures.

- (iv) *Bodily Intelligence* – Active housewives, soldiers, commandos, mountaineers, sailors, sports players, dancers, actors, medical surgeons, laborers have this ability to utilize parts of the body promptly to accomplish their tasks.
 - (v) *Musical Intelligence* – Music composers, singers, artists & some birds have this ability to grasp & reproduce complicated sequences of sound perfectly.
 - (vi) *Natural Intelligence* – Farmers, human-animal-birds who are natives of forest-village-island-mountains, cooks, travelers, naturopaths, etc. have this ability to judge weather-flood-earthquake fruits-flowers-plants-vegetables eclipse-rain-drought etc. better than ordinary urbanites.
 - (vii) *Interpersonal Intelligence* – Now let's talk about urbanites. Salesmen, managers, leaders have this ability to become popular by understanding others' expectations and by establishing-maintaining-enhancing contacts with others.
 - (viii) *Intrapersonal Intelligence* – Mentally mature elders, thinkers, philosophers, counselors, etc. have this ability to keep their emotions-thoughts-behavior in control and guide the confused ones in this regard.
5. This MI theory has brought drastic changes in education pattern in schools, especially in the USA. The type of intelligence in individual student is judged and accordingly the teaching pattern is customized. Many students, servicemen & professionals themselves also recognize their own intelligence and get into a relevant career. (ancient Indian gurukul style of education also used to cover all these types of intelligence. e.g. Kshatriyas were taught how to use weapons as well. For more info., one can refer subodhini of passages wherein ShriKrishna's studying at Guru Sandipani's ashram is narrated.)
 6. Dr. Gardner opines that this field is still open to fresh thinking. There can be more than 8 types. Or in other words, their boundaries can be shrunk or broadened. On the eve of completion of 20 years of proposing the theory, in 2003 he wrote that still more research is needed & he himself is active in this regard.
 7. In 1995, Dr. Daniel Golemann started a worldwide movement by writing a book titled 'Emotional Intelligence'. 5 million copies of this book in 30 languages have been already sold ! Many giant MNCs like American Express, Avon, Shell, Unilever, Nestle, Pfizer, Lockheed, Hilton, Boeing, Motorola, Johnson & Johnson, etc. train their employees for emotional intelligence & earn more profits by their improved performance. It is found especially helpful in grooming leaders, increasing sales & reducing attrition rate ; because traditional IQ is not much of use in this regard. Employees with better emotional intelligence can take better decisions in their work as well as personal life. Managers can make their team members motivated, confident & committed to deliver results and side by side also take their care when needed in downturns. In personal life the employees remain happy, fit & satisfied. This is one side of the coin.
 8. There is the other side of coin as well. Dr. Golemann hopes this movement shall lead to growth of empathy among people all over the world that shall help in fighting with unity against poverty-starvation-disasters-clashes-diseases. People shall rise above their individual interests and think as well as act in harmony with the world. In the last decade the world witnessed some shocking incidents –
 - (i) 9/11 WTC terrorist attackers were pilots trained for over 1000 hours in the USA. They were trained to control big jet planes but not trained even for an hour to control their mind ! So they got overwhelmed by feeling of revenge to the extent they were not feared of death. Since then such suicide bombings are not uncommon.
 - (ii) The soldiers of USA deputed in Abu-Garib & other jails of Iraq tortured guilty/innocent prisoners mercilessly and its video clippings were telecast worldwide. It involved high ranked army officers as well. British people thought that their disciplined army is unlike that of the USA but their lady sergeant was found giving similar treatment in another jail ! This is a clear breach of Geneva convention guidelines for code of conduct related to prisoners of war. These army officers also were trained for 10,000+ hours. But they learnt how to operate weapons, not their mind. The line of demarcation between army & terrorists is often only the uniform. The police force is no exception. The world over their brutality is highlighted every now & then.
 - (iii) The world cup final of 2006 was the last match of French icon Zinedin Zidane, because before the start of the tournament, this best footballer of that era had announced his retirement plans thereafter. In the important moments of the game, he got so annoyed at an Italian player's provoking behavior & comments that he knocked him down by a head-kick in his chest ! Zidane was immediately shown red card & asked to leave the ground. The French team subsequently lost the match & the cup ! Zidane's dream of retiring as a member of a world-cup winner team thus shattered due to loss of temper for a while & shall instead remain a bad memory for rest of his life. Around 10 million+ TV viewers all over the world were stunned ! That apart cricketers, boxers, tennis players, athletes, weight-lifters, gymnasts, etc. are often found guilty of match-fixing, drug intake, gender change, etc. The pressure of winning & earning seems ruling over sportsman spirit. The rise in suicide cases among students is also alarming. (UNO's World

Health Organization directs education ministries of member countries to introduce 'Life Skills Education' at secondary school level to tackle such issues. In India, it is made part of the textbooks now).

9. What is this Emotional Intelligence after all ? As per MI Theory, it combines the Intrapersonal & Interpersonal Intelligence. But it needs to be dug deeper. To do so, first one should understand emotions. Emotions mean feelings that are being expressed. The expressions can be many - facial ones or fast heartbeats or weeping or covering the face by hand. The feelings that are thus expressed can be joy, anger, fear, despair, surprise, empathy, etc. These feelings & their expressions often appear involuntarily instantaneously. Birds & animals also express their feelings e.g. a cuckoo singing on arrival of spring or a peacock in monsoon.
10. In our scriptures of drama, these expressions are called Anubhaava. How to express a feeling by a corresponding expression is shown there e.g. shying is expressed by hiding the face or oneself. In a drama, the actors voluntarily reveal expressions so that viewers can infer relevant feelings. Likewise every culture/civilization has its unique set of expressions for a common feeling. However exceptionally some expressions are common the world over – shying turns the face hot & red, anger or fear rises heart pulses, joy makes one feel relaxed, despair chokes the throat, desire dries the throat, etc.
11. Scientists say that these expressions of feelings are an integral part of the desire to survive among animals in the evolution process. Because emotions and knowledge/thought, apparently considered to be opponents, are actually quite closely associated with each other to initiate an action. E.g. on sensing a good/bad smell, the animals give a typical corresponding facial expression and become active to move near/away from it. Thus emotions play a significant role in any decision making. Saif Palanpuri says – “If you have only intellect, then the world is cruel & merciless. But if you have feelings, the world is full of love !” But then viewing the world as cruel & merciless is also a kind of feeling only ! The involuntary expressions of feelings can be traced back to memory of sweet-sour experiences in past or can also be hereditary.
12. There is no consensus among modern western thinkers as regards what & how many are the emotions. Some classify them as primary & secondary as well. Some say that emotions are nothing but various compositions of neuro-chemicals in the brain. The others compare emotions to good / bad smells which are turn by turn intensely spread & then disappear in the brain which houses them. An emotion is felt till it dominates other emotions. (In India the emotions are studied not as a part of dry science but as a part of drama & literature. There are 9 to 11 Rasa = Sthayibhaavas & corresponding to each of them are Anubhaavas & Sancharibhaavas. Each of them are elaborated at length.)
13. As the emotions are involuntary, there is an uncertainty always associated with it. Nobody can predict with 100 % confidence that a new movie will be a hit. Spouse of 25 years are sometimes not sure whether their partner shall like their particular dress or a decision or an activity.
14. Intense emotions provoke people towards thoughtless acts of violence, rape, etc. Ancient Afghans used to get so angry that they used to kill that person even before thinking twice. Once calming down, they used to think why they got angry so much ! Often the issue used to be quite petty ! We also sometimes behave like this. Dr. Golemann explains this by interrelationship of various parts of brain. He says that the message from our senses is forwarded to Cortex by Thalamus. Cortex analyses it and accordingly instructs Amygdala to reveal expressions as well as actions. But this is by default, taking its own time. In emergency, Thalamus bypasses Cortex & directly approaches Amygdala to save time. Amygdala in turn reveals action that it find suitable on its own, mostly a one from its stored data of past. This may lead to save or lose life depending upon circumstances. E.g. passengers quickly jump out of a running train when it catches fire, without looking around.
15. Such a 'kidnapping of Amygdala' can be avoided by an emotionally capable person. If one holds on for 3 to 6 seconds, the wave of intense emotion settles down on its own. This is emotional intelligence. So now let us go back to emotional intelligence from emotions. Since last 30 years, it has been a hot topic of research in the USA. Right now there are half a million web pages of information available on this topic, out of which I have read a few. A new angle has been added now to look at emotions. Earlier they were thought of as a disturbance in concentrating on work./ thinking process. But recent studies highlight their positive role. Now they are considered to be acting like a tonic in concentrating, thinking, working. An indicator EQ or EIQ has also come in picture, just like IQ scores.
16. The summary of the research so far is as follows –
 - (i) Peter Salovei, John Major, David Caruso & Dr. Bar-on believe that Emotional Intelligence is sum of our 3 capabilities – to feel emotions, to understand emotions & to generate result-oriented emotions that boost our work or thought. In other words it is a capability to obtain encouraging results from our relations with self & others. It is a capability to successfully withstand external pressures & situations. (To understand this, one must watch Sunny Deol acting as a Major of Indian army in the movie 'Border'). It is different from IQ, because an illiterate person with low

IQ can also have high Emotional Intelligence. However it is not the opposite of IQ. It also does not mean heart winning over the brain. It is a combination of development of emotions as well as of an intelligence other than that related to knowledge. Since emotions are revealed in the brain, it is essentially a capability of brain & has nothing to do with the heart.

- (ii) Though the researchers differ in estimating the proportion as to whether it is 30-70 or 50-50 or 70-30, they all agree that both nature & nurture (/ genetic traits & environment / inherent potential & circumstances) are responsible for development of EQ. Though genetic traits are uncontrollable, environment / circumstances if controlled well can improve EQ beyond doubt.
 - (iii) Dr. Daniel Golemann says that uncontrolled waves of emotions obstruct thoughts & work. So it is a challenge to surf on these waves to reach destination without getting drown. But otherwise if seen objectively, each of the emotion corresponds to readiness to perform a peculiar action. E.g. happiness brings fresh wave of energy in the entire body. Anger increases the blood flow towards hands so that it can start hitting. Fear makes children cry or sleep while in elders it increases blood flow towards legs to help running away. A sexually excited person can't sit steadily. Absence of such a correlation may lead to troubles. If a child does not start crying out of fear, the busy elders nearby do not notice the danger of a fire or a stranger. Children which do not express their emotions quickly invite more troubles; sometimes guardians are too late to rescue them.
 - (iv) Morris Elias & Steven Tobias believe that uncomfortable emotions indicate that one has some problems in dealing with that thing. E.g. if a child complains of headache or stomachache daily at the time of going to school or feels lousy as soon as he starts doing homework, one can conclude that he has some problem with the school or homework. In such a situation, one has to (a) understand such an emotion (b) identify the problem at its root (c) think implications of its various solutions (d) select one of the solutions (e) implement it (f) periodically monitor the progress towards target, in order to come out of it.
 - (v) Bomeister believes that willpower is like a muscle; it gets stronger on repeated use. So one should start with tiny easily controllable tasks like standing on one foot, holding the breath, skipping a meal, etc. & gradually apply it for tough tasks.
 - (vi) Skinner believes that a behavior which is appreciated / rewarded in life is firmly retained for life time, thereby increasing E.Q. If an unwrapped chocolate is frequently kept in front of a child studying in an isolated place and he is told that if he won't eat that chocolate then he shall be given two of them instead, then after some time on repeatedly getting 2 chocolates the child shall be capable of controlling his desire to grab unwrapped food the moment it is seen.
17. Now let us see in reverse order how these modern beliefs have parallels in our Samarpana program.
- (i) There are numerous quotations in various scriptures which glorify samarpana. An Upanishada states that the pure food obtained after samarpana when ate purifies oneself, thereby aiding recollection of memory & thereby liberation. Bhagavata puranam states that His servant using food-cloth-ornaments-perfumes, etc. that were first used by Him can overcome His Maya i.e. power of illusion. Shri Mahaprabhuji states in Siddhantarahasya that just like water of sewage becoming that of Ganga on merging with it, His servant's mundane belongings become divine. Viceversa use of asamarpita things has been condemned. Gita states that one who cooks food for only himself is like eating sins. Shri Mahaprabhuji says that a person intensely occupied in fulfilling his mundane desires can't get engaged with Him. A wise guy can easily make out that following the Samarpana program sincerely is the right choice.
 - (ii) The willpower increases by applying it in small matters – this is the essence of samarpana program. By regularly using food, clothes, etc. for His seva first, a person can cultivate an emotional discipline within himself that they are not meant for his own consumption. For such a cultivation, Shri Mahaprabhuji recommends that you daily perform small tasks of seva like washing clothes yourself. Do not become complacent on getting Brahasambandha Diksha, thinking that you are now liberated. A wise guy shall not take just one dip in Ganga & come out to swim in sewage water. He shall regularly keep on taking dips in Ganga for lifetime. That apart, Shri Mahaprabhuji instructs that activities which do not seem useful in samarpana shall be always restricted.
 - (iii) Shri Mahaprabhuji, etc. acharyas have given detailed guidelines in their writings regarding how uncomfortable emotions in our divine life should be understood, the problems at their root should be identified & their solutions should be sincerely implemented to get rid of / control over them. The same shall be elaborated upon here later.
 - (iv) Ideally which emotion should prevail in oneself while which activity of Seva is being carried out is well explained by Shri Mahaprabhuji. E.g. while Shringar i.e. dressing Him up, we should be full of feeling of love. Shri Mahaprabhuji says that a feeling of perfection or tension at that time

shall be a misfit, leading to emotional uneasiness. Likewise to avoid any misconduct & thereby disrespect for Him, one should be feared a bit. While cooking for Him, one should be alert not to spoil the recipe. Side by side, the emotions of devotees of Vraja are coupled by reciting Kirtans thro' out the daily program, right from His waking up till He is made to sleep. While reciting, we are expected to feel these emotions in ourselves as if we are situated in Vraja. In activities not involving Him, we are instructed to touch upon another set of emotions. E.g. while dusting & sweeping the floor, Shri Harirayaji asks us to recite Navaratna & feel as if we are wiping off dustbin-worthy improper emotions from our heart to make it eligible for His residing. While wrapping up the daily Seva routine, we should recite Kirtans of His glory & our surrender, thereby as if returning from Vraja. Along with these fluctuating variety, a steady emotion of Atmanivedana i.e. self-declaration should be retained, whether Seva is going on or is wrapped up. Apart from all these driver-like emotions, there is a driven passenger like emotion of anxious enthusiasm that should be promoted. For His pleasure being the only aim, occasionally we should stretch ourselves extra in a mood similar to that in a honeymoon / new marriage & do something out of the routine i.e. Manoratha. In response, we can expect Him to respond, with anxiety.

- (v) A follower of this program must be showered by His grace, in form of a seed-like built-in emotion of devotion within him. Those with this nature can only be nurtured in this program to move ahead. For others, it is simply impossible, while one with this nature can survive thro' a series of unfavorable circumstances. A glance at the history of our sect reveals how the sincere followers withstood in tough times.
18. At the end, let us see some examples. In the stories of 84 Vaishnavas, etc. we find many instances that show development of their EQ by following the program of Samarpana. I shall take only 2 cases here. Damodardas Sambharwala was a rich native of the city of Kannauj, who used to buy horses & ride one to go to his office. He had many servants & maids. However to bring water for Him, daily he used to walk all the way with a pot to a river and back. His father-in-law felt ashamed of this, so one day he visited & asked him to stop doing it himself & depute a servant instead. However the next day he took 2 pots & his wife for the task ! His father-in-law apologized for his advice. Purushottamdas of Banaras was a millionaire & was awarded eligibility to initiate others in our sect by Shri Mahaprabhuji. But daily at night he used to go walking to another companion's home for Satsang. He was lured by Lord Madhusudanji for wealth but he remained unmoved. He was not impressed by Shiva or Bhairava in spite of staying in their city. He himself used to clean the cow stable & used to meet the king while doing so. Even in old age he was as enthusiastic as a young one. To offer nice food to Him, he used to abandon & return midway from a pilgrimage. He insisted his companion devotees to eat that Prasad first & then ate himself.
19. To conclude then, the program of Samarpana seems fully fit in modern western context. It can be followed by a person having one or many of the multiple intelligences. It is a proven thorough & systematic program of carefully weaving our emotions in devotion & getting their hold to move ahead; outclassing modern curriculums of pilots, soldiers, sportspersons which simply lack such detailed treatment. It is universal in the sense that it is for all the places & all the times. But then it is not for everyone. It is meant for those who are chosen by Him for His devotion.

3. INDIAN CONTEXT

Eligibility for the 3 paths :

There is a wrong belief being intentionally spread quite successfully, that the path of knowledge (Gyana) is meant for intellectuals with high IQ, the path of action (Karma) is meant for active guys with high VQ (volition quotient) ; while the path of devotion (Bhakti) is for left out dull & lazy people !

However this is indeed a wrong belief. A glance at scriptures & history of devotees indicate otherwise. On the contrary, Shri Mahaprabhuji says that a scholar of scriptures &/or an active guy occupied in rituals cheats himself, if he abandons devotion of ShriKrishna. His destiny shall be movement in the cycle of birth & death only. A look at history reveals that devotees include kings, ministers, poets, soldiers, thieves ...almost from every layer of the society. The glory of Surdasji's poetic creativity has attracted many scholars worldwide, including 6 Russians, to write Ph. D. thesis on his voluminous literature of Kirtans. More recently in 20th century, Pandit Gattulalaji of Mumbai was awarded title of 'Sun of India'. In spite of being blind, he was a great scholar & used to answer 100 questions one by one. His contemporary 'Moon of India' Harishchandra Babu of Banaras was pioneer of modern journalism & drama in India as also the Swadeshi (be Indian buy Indian; patriotic) movement. These are just a few of outstanding talented devotees. So let us abandon such baseless belief & understand from scriptures with an open mind which path is meant for whom.

ShriBhagawata Puranam states that the path of Gyana is for those who almost lack worldly desires, Karma is for those who have intense worldly desires & Bhakti is for the intermediate ones who are driven neither by desires nor by their hatred. In other words, the criteria is not IQ or VQ but EQ. The followers of path of Gyana want to get rid of the illusory world rather than surrendering to desires. The followers of Karma meanwhile want to occupy themselves with a program that can fulfill their worldly & heavenly desires. They want to prosper. The followers of Bhakti are neither too attached nor too detached to the world.

Mind / emotions decides our eligibility :

Our scriptures state that human mind is the cause of bondage or liberation.

Why so ? More than our IQ, our emotions decide in which direction we shall move, be it right or wrong. Under intense emotions, a person does not hesitate in killing himself or a mob in a terror attack. The intellect works like an accelerator in such a situation instead of a brake, to make the attack meticulously planned & thereby more horrific. So is the case with VQ or activeness. Arjuna lost the zeal to fight war of Kurukshetra because of his emotions; not because of lack of IQ or VQ. There is a famous quotation from Mahabharata in this regard: Duryodhana says that I know what is ethically correct to do but I do not follow it ; I know what is incorrect to do but I do not get rid of it ! In other words he says that my emotions win over my intellect & activeness. We often see live telecast of proceedings of the parliament or legislative assembly wherein the honorable members ignore orders of the leader of the house, leave aside the discipline & begin with shouting to end with fighting / suspension of themselves or the house !

In fact in Jainism, they believe that in the process of perception, there is a stage 'Eehaa' when the emotions involuntarily give their contribution while the senses are still delivering their message to the brain. That is the reason why a book is perceived as a readable by humans but as an eatable by a pest, they say. The American perception of Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Israel, etc. is biased by their interests rather than being an objective one.

This is the reason behind similarity in instructions for daily life in different religions. All religions expect us to avoid lies, anger, cheating, addictions, breach of trust, impurity of mind-body-speech, wealth compiling, bad character, hurting others, etc. because these bad habits spoil us. If a religious person thus controls himself, he can get liberated from parcels of sorrows attached to these bad habits & can go ahead instead.

Emotions & Ahamta-Mamata :

Emotions can be broadly classified as Ahamta = I-ness & Mamata = My-ness. I-ness is expressed in the way we introduce or narrate ourselves (e.g. a follower of a sect). My-ness is expressed when we introduce or narrate our living / non-living belongings (e.g. my son, my car). Both of them are elastic like a rubber balloon. Thro' out the life, a person keeps on blowing air in them to let them expand. Ups & down are part of the life as also arrival & departure of living / non-living belongings. But problem is that these 2 emotions do not prosper peacefully! They confront with each other & take away calmness possessed by a person. In absence of calmness, people take rash decisions, often inappropriate. E.g. a corrupt officer of a government department or a temple defends his corruption by declaring its motive as prosperity of his family ! So both these tendencies should be kept in check.

The path of Gyana is for those who have a good command over My-ness but need to win over I-ness. The path of Karma is for people with worldly/heavenly desires. These desires melt down their I-ness but their my-ness is fast growing. The path of Bhakti is for people with average command over both I-ness & my-ness.

None of the three are fully fit. All of them are patients needing an appropriate treatment. But fitness means harmony of I-ness & My-ness; not their absence. Lack of their harmony culminates into 6 vices of desires-anger-greed-temptation-ego-jealousy. Shri Mahaprabhuji states that desires destroy zeal for rituals, anger kills knowledge while greed harms devotion. So a follower should beware of these enemies within. The tongs of lie & greed grab His truth & bliss. In his Sarvanirayanibandha, Shri Mahaprabhuji has elaborated upon evolution of these 6 vices. But here I am not going into those details.

To simplify, a person with his/her I-ness & my-ness in harmony is an emotionally intelligent one. High degree of harmony means high EQ. The 3 paths have their own programs to bring harmony in the follower. However all followers being a human only, there is some similarity in these programs. E.g. emotional imagination is essential part of all 3 paths. In a ritual of the path of Karma, the follower has to hold the string tied to the divine horse & while doing so recite a mantra that states that I hereby hold string of immortality. Likewise each activity has to be accompanied by recitation of a mantra that reminds one of the divine emotions that should prevail then; just like our Kirtans. In the path of Gyana also, there are parallels like worshipping / meditation of a mental image or an idol. The path of Bhakti is dominated by emotions so it is needless to elaborate. Such emotional imagination sublimates our mental tendencies & improves involvement in the program.

The Path of Devotion & Program of Samarpana :

3 types of paths are meant for 3 types of followers. Out of them, in our sect souls eligible for PushtiBhakti should undergo program of Samarpana. Devotion = love + service. This service involves utilizing all of our belongings & self to serve Him. So a follower is expected to daily perform his Seva with all his motor & sensory organs-family members-wealth, etc. Such a service as per this program provides conducive environment for His love to grow. It also effortlessly protects it from harmful circumstances.

Although the aim of this program is His pleasure & not treatment of our disordered emotions, this program has a built-in potential to harmonize our I-ness & My-ness. Shri Gosainji says that a devotee quite involved in His service may not wish to acquire the knowledge of the Brahman & liberation from sorrows of the illusory world, but it happens on its own because of the Samarpana program. In Siddhantarahasya, the process of Samarpana is praised as one of divine purification, like merging of sewage water in holy river Ganga. This is because as per scriptures, the entire universe is a creation with a built-in potential to serve Him. Every creation is part of His divine game. The role of every creation is to participate in His divine play. Under influence of disproportionate I-ness & My-ness, a person gets drowned in the stream of destiny. But the moment he starts Samarpana, he takes a bath in His divine stream. Thereafter a devotee can even scold Him while worshipping! If love for Him does not prosper in such a situation, it will be a surprise !

Apart from treatment of our I-ness & My-ness, the Samarpana program treats other aspects of devotion as well. The two parts of devotion i.e. knowledge of His greatness & love carry some features which are not helpful in devotion. E.g. after acquiring knowledge of His greatness, one may start expecting that He shall fulfill my worldly/heavenly desires. Or in love one may avoid His service when angry upon Him for some reason. These two apart, the initiation i.e. Brahmasambandha diksha or even the Seva can be done without pious motives of devotion. But the spirit of samarpana trims off such improper features and makes them devotional.

The present doomed scenario :

If we read or listen to statements made in our sect these days, we get shivers, as they just reveal the sheer cunningness & no divinity at all. "A person doing His worship to fulfill his worldly desires is an eligible devotee, though of low stature. These days most of them are like that only !" "If we worship Him with public donations, we shall not be egoistic but humble instead !" "If they do not visit temples, where from will they learn how to worship ? However in today's busy lifestyle, people often lack space & time needed for worship at home. Let public temples worship on their behalf. If a person has come to the temple, he must be a pious soul ! His money also must be pious one, so must be captured." "Ordinary followers do not obey traditional rules & regulations of Aparasa. So they should abandon Seva once their obedient elders die. Instead they should return the deity & His wealth to the Guru." "The principles of unconditional devotion are OK for followers of high stature, but they are not appealing to NRIs. To pull these low stature guys in our sect, Gurus must keep aside these principles and get engaged into fraud-like functions / programs !" "It is true that giving away Brahmasambandha Diksha rampantly leads to anarchy in our sect, but until all of us accumulate and unanimously commit ourselves not to do so, I shall not hastily stop doing so alone, because then I will be at a loss !" " This sounds like a person engaged in extra-marital affairs stating "It is true that rampant extra-marital

sexual relations lead to AIDS, but until all of us accumulate and unanimously commit ourselves not to do so, I shall not hastily stop doing so alone !” If every male & female thinks so, how AIDS’s spread can be controlled?

Anyway. A surprising fact is that what outsider scholars opine about our sect’s principles. In the beginning of 20th century, as an initial part of a British plot to blaspheme & terminate religious sects one by one, a Liable case was lodged, in which our sect was projected as if a sect of affairs among Gurus & their female disciples. At that time, some patriotic Indian scholars belonging to other sects like Jain got the clue of the plot. So they studied our sect’s literature & published their research work at their own expense wherein they established that our sect preaches a divine program of Samarpana to Lord ShriKrishna; it has no immoral content! Later a German & recently some American scholars also reiterated the same conclusion. But are we listening? Even if we listen, why we pretend to not understand &/or follow? The way we recognize ourselves as a Pushtimargiya, we should also be & recognize ourselves as a Samarpanamargiya. That day our sect shall blossom! In words of Shri Mahaprabhuji, “Our spirit to worship Him is our whole wealth! So let us worship Him. He shall look after us.”

The Vision of Life in Samarpana Program :

A Gujarati poet Makarand Dave says –
I SHALL BELIEVE THAT ALL BELONGINGS ARE MINE & THEREBY ACCEPT THE LIFE, AND I SHALL BELIEVE THAT NOTHING IS MINE & THEREBY BE PREPARED FOR DEATH !

In one line he has narrated his vision of life! He has also shown how to deal with I-ness & My-ness. Let me elaborate.

Life is a whole. In one life we have been assigned many roles – son, grandson, brother, student, boss/staffer, husband, father, householder, citizen, follower/disciple, grandfatherEach of these is an aspect of our personality. Refusing one of these roles means refusing life, because life is incomplete without it. So accepting the life wholeheartedly means we should spread our I-ness & My-ness to the extent that we do justice with each of these roles. Our relatives need not revolt like Harilal Gandhi. Thus we can keep on, with harmony.

But the scenario changes at the time of death. Death means exiting the stage. Apart from body, we have to abandon our I-ness & My-ness in living / non-living belongings then. But this is often not accomplished. So the soul does not get liberated. A so called microbody (Sukshma Sharira), formed of our I-ness & My-ness, remains attached to our soul; dragging the soul in the cycle of 84 lac births !

To escape, we can try to believe thro’ out our life that nothing belongs to me. But this is easy said than done. In the epic story of Jadabharatji, he stayed in woods, away from the worldly bondages of relationships. But he nourished an orphan deer cub in his ashram & in doing so got affectionate! So balancing is tricky. As the poet suggests, in the life we should keep on accepting all the duties & keep on relinquishing all the rights.

Though this vision of life is quite clear and straightforward to understand & at the same time difficult to practice, if we think about it then we come to know that we do practice it knowingly or unknowingly. In the introduction, we had thought of various magic switches. In that context, this acceptance of a task/person in life as mine is a powerful switch for action & discarding my-ness for inaction. If a housewife accepts the in-laws as her own, she nourishes them whole-heartedly with full energy thro’ out the life. Otherwise she behaves like a step mother, even though the flat is on her name! Similarly the in-laws love her as a family member if they accept her as their own & vice versa. The situation is no different in jobs or even religious sects. A student laggard in studies becomes self-declared leader in picnic or funfair because he feels that activity as his own. Some people take pride in owning indigenous goods while others in only imported ones! Some people hate make-up and fashion, while others are so obsessed that even in morning walk or mourning meetings, they do not miss doing make-up and fashion! Some celebrate quietly at home or at an isolated place with limited attendance while others prefer grand celebrations. Thus we human beings have a built-in nature to get engaged in our own activities & get disengaged from those which are not our own. The moment a person retires from a job, his & his colleague’s attitude & behavior changes. So is the life !

If we have understood this vision of life stated by the poet, it is not difficult to understand vision of life of a dedicated devotee of our sect. Though there is not a single statement in this regard, several available statements can be clubbed to make a single statement as follows :

- (A) I SHALL BELIEVE THAT ALL MY BELONGINGS ARE FOR THE LORD & THEREBY ACCEPT THE LIFE, AND
- (B) I SHALL BELIEVE THAT NOTHING IS MINE & THEREBY BE PREPARED FOR ITS CONSUMPTION / RENUNCIATION / RESTRAINT / MAINTENANCE / MY INSULT OR AVOIDANCE AS APPROPRIATE!

Now let us understand each phrase of this statement.

(A1) Shri Mahaprabhuji differentiates between a Brahmgyaani (one having enlightened experience of the Brahman) & a devotee in ShastrarthaNibandha as follows : a Brahmgyaani experiences divine bliss only by

soul, whereas a devotee experiences by soul, body, senses, mind & family as well ! At the time of initiation by Atmanivedana diksha, a follower of our sect declares that all his/her belongings are dedicated to the Lord. So thereafter his/her daily schedule of activities shall be focused upon His service. One should be engaged in His service according to one's capability & wealth. In the morning one should get up to perform His service, purify the body by bathing for His service, cook for Him, earn or buy for His service, eat the prasada to keep the body fit for Seva, rest or sleep so that Seva can be performed without getting tired ... to the extent Shri Mahaprabhuji states in Nirodhakshana that even our organs for enjoying sex can be utilized for His service by giving birth to a child who can be groomed to perform His service !

(A2) Things which are popular as also of our choice should be utilized for His service, be it food / clothes / ornaments / music / paintings, etc. But it should be "my belonging", not of others'. A bowl of pulses purchased from the money earned thro' sweating ethical hard work is what is expected; not a multicourse meal offered from the money that is collected by begging from the public. Also, "all my belongings" does not mean each of my belonging. Medicines, footwear, etc. can't be offered. The offerings should be as per His & our relationship's dignity.

(B1) After offering to the Lord, the prasadi food, etc. should be consumed with a spirit of His-ness & not my-ness. It means one should treat them not as her/his belonging but as a reward given by Him as a mark of honor. Our home, family, wealth, etc. all should be treated as if meant for His service & thereafter the left over is to be consumed by us without the feeling of my-ness.

(B2) Though we intend to offer all our belongings for His service, He may not wish to accept each of them. So some of our belongings or even family members may try to interrupt our Seva. Then we should first discard our feeling of I-ness & My-ness for them & later if needed abandon them for sake of His devotion.

(B3) Similarly all our senses & organs, when not in His service, keep on attending the mundane objects. So they should be restrained. One should be always cautious to perform religious duties & keep away from unethical nuisances by restraining the senses & organs.

(B4) Even if our family members or senses are not participating in His service, we should look after them with a well-wish that they shall get well soon; the way a patient looks after his body when unwell.

(B5) If our family members & neighbors neither participate nor create nuisance in Seva, we should ignore them & avoid interaction with them. Even if they insult us, we should not retaliate but bear with it.

In short, all our belongings need to be dealt with as appropriate based on their usefulness or otherwise in Seva.

A devotee with such a vision & character is safe-guarded from ill effects of I-ness & My-ness. He is effortlessly liberated of mundane pains & sorrows. He acquires indirect knowledge of Brahman as well. He need not wait till the death for liberation; during the life itself his/her I-ness & My-ness get trimmed to size in routine life & get involved in Seva. In words of Shri Mahaprabhuji, such a wonderful chain the Lord is, those who are tied to Him enjoy the life full of divine bliss & those who are untied get drowned in the mundane world! Such a bonding is above all achievements of the paths of Gyana, Karma or Upasana.

In the stories of 84 & 252 Vaishnavas as also Acharyas, we find many examples of this devotional character. A devotee named Rukmini was daughter of Seth Purushottamdas, one of the richest native of Varanasi. She was so occupied with Seva that in spite of living in Varanasi, she went for a holy bath in Gangaji once after 24 years ! Shri Gosainji praised her by saying that the Lord shall always be indebted to her ! When her body was not fit any more for Seva due to ageing, she felt that this body is of no use now; better if it is left off ! When her last rites were performed on the banks of Ganges, Shri Gosainji said that Gangaji is fortunate to get Rukmini rather than Rukmini to get Gangaji ! A devotee poet Dayaramabhai says that a devotee of the Lord remains full of bliss thro' out the day & places of pilgrimage eagerly await their arrival !

4. PREACHINGS RELATED TO OUR EMOTIONS

Now let us have a look at the preaching of Shri Mahaprabhuji corresponding to emotions at various stages on the path of devotion. These preachings are spread in various books – Shodashgranthas, Shikshashloki, the Bhaktiprakarana of Sarvanirnayanibandha, etc. Here I have avoided elaboration but have only given indications. For more information, I request the readers to study these books themselves, preferably with commentaries.

If a preaching is reiterated at the start, middle & end, it indicates that it is emphasized upon. That way here in Siddhantmuktavali, Nirodhlakshana & Shikshashloki, it has been stated that the Lord should not be dealt with mundane selfish emotions but instead we should incorporate divine emotions in our devotion by Bhaavana of emotions of devotees of Vraja. Shri Harirayaji states that a devotee should do the Lord's Seva thro' out the life as his / her religious duty, not for sake of any achievements / virtues / popularity. Also, Seva should be done according to preaching of Shri Mahaprabhuji, not according to one's own imagination/fantasy. Seva should not be done with inappropriate emotions like greed, etc.

The book Krishnashraya deals with the emotions of a novice devotee on the path of devotion / surrender. Whereas Vivekadhairyaashraya focuses upon inappropriate emotions. Navaratna & Chatuhshloki describe appropriate emotions. Lastly Antahkaranaprabodha deals with emotions of a sincere devotee at an advanced stage of devotion. Let's see one by one briefly.

First of all, Krishnashraya states futility of other paths in Kaliyug. All six constituents of Karmamarg i.e. time, place, ingredients, person, rituals & mantras have lost their potential to uplift a sincere follower because of inherent faults, contamination, etc. Thereafter the necessity of His surrender on the paths of Karma, Gyana, Upasana, Bhakti & Sharana has been explained. Lastly a novice follower has been asked to approach Him & surrender by body, speech & mind; abandoning faith elsewhere & establishing faith in the Lord alone.

Then in Vivekadhairyaashraya, a process of getting rid of various inappropriate emotions has been elaborated upon. It is basically a 3 step method: feel an inappropriate emotion, understand it & replace it with an appropriate emotion. These appropriate emotions have been classified in 3 categories: Viveka = sense of discrimination, Dhairya = perseverance & Aashraya = surrender.

Let's see an example. "Ego should be abandoned by grooming an emotion that I am governed by the Lord." Here one has to (i) feel that the emotion prevailing in his/her mind is ego (ii) understand that it should be abandoned if one has to move ahead on path of devotion/surrender & (iii) replace it with a result-oriented emotion of being governed by the Lord. (This 3 step method is the same as that applied for enhancing emotional intelligence. It has been found that an inappropriate emotion can be easily discarded by replacing it with another appropriate emotion rather than just by knowledge/understanding ; especially if the person is sentimental.)

Viveka takes care of 4 inappropriate emotions of praying, ego, stubbornness & prejudices. They need to be replaced by an emotion of being governed by the Lord followed by prior-judging our actions whether they comply with the religious code of conduct.

Dhairya is basically preaching of perseverance in awkward / adverse circumstances. A follower undergoes 3 kind of sorrows in the life – (i) related to body e.g. illness, (ii) mind e.g. unfulfilled desires & (iii) destiny e.g. being unfortunate. Rather than retaliating or losing the fighting spirit or getting dragged in them or boasting of our willpower, we are expected to bear with them ; the way great devotees like Jadabharatji dealt with them.

Lastly Aashraya is the preaching of surrender. In all of our good or bad actions or situations, we should maintain our Aashraya of mind & speech at least. E.g. when we are insulted by our dependents, we offend a devotee by mistake, we commit a crime, we lack devotional spirit, we pass thro' a phase full of sorrows & losses, etc. Also, we should understand that retaining faith in other gods/goddesses or not having full faith in our Lord is not at all acceptable. So such harmful emotions should be replaced at the earliest by grooming appropriate result-oriented emotions like that of the bird Chataka.

Further in Navaratna, how a devotee should get rid of various worries related to his/her religious progress has been preached. These preachings need to be discussed with identical devotees often so that they get deep-rooted in our mind. The list of worries dealt with here includes voluntary as well as involuntary ones; related to self, family members, initiation, utilization in devotion, harmony in social life, disobedience of Guru's instructions, depression, etc.

Chatuhshloki elaborates upon 4 types of goals in the life of a devotee – Dharma (= duty), Artha (= wealth), Kama (= desires) & Moksha (= liberation). A devotee should remain focused on these goals by mind, speech & body & cultivate likings in line with them.

On prima facie, Antahkaranaprabodha gives preaching of consolation to a groomed devotee when he/she regret their disobedience of the Lord's particular instruction to them. But side by side it also alerts a novice devotee not to be complacent in utilizing all belongings for Seva.

Thus Shri Mahaprabhuji has preached not only a novice devotee but also those at advanced stages of devotion. This proves that His is a well-thought perfect program, not a gimmick.

In the later times, preaching of Shri Gokulnathji & Shri Harirayji are noteworthy. Shri Gokulnathji's preaching are available in the stories of 84 Vaishnavas, 24 & Hasya Vachanamruta, etc. in a brief manner. Whereas Shri Harirayji in His Shikshapatras & Vangmuktavali preaches in an elaborated manner. Thereafter not much of a new contribution is found. However songs in Vrajabhasha-gujarati-hindi composed by poets like Shri Dayaramabhai based on the above preaching are amply available & are quite popular also.

If we take a bird's view at all these preaching, we find one remarkable difference. Whereas Shri Mahaprabhuji's preaching are based on our master-servant sort of relationship with the Lord, Shri Harirayji's preaching highlight father-son sort of relationship. He expects us to feel the Lord's caretaking nature in each incidence of our life, whether apparently good or bad. These preaching are traceable to scattered quotes in the scriptures & Shri Mahaprabhuji's literature as well, but the credit of their compilation & projection goes to Shri Harirayji.

However after getting so much information on this topic, one has to understand that getting stuck to master-servant or father-son sort of relationship stubbornly is not appropriate. Rather one should focus upon replacing inappropriate emotions with result-oriented proper ones that can quickly get into one's own heart. (Different people may find different emotions proper for them). This way valuable time that can be utilized for His Seva, shall not be wasted. Because lack of emotional involvement is stated as the first hurdle in Seva by Shri Mahaprabhuji in Sevaphala.

Love Vs. Emotional Intelligence

At this juncture, we should understand that a successful devotee may not necessarily be one who maintains his mental stability by grooming proper result-oriented emotions. Love is as mischievous as the Lord & so it may shake our whole life, as also I-ness & My-ness. A devotee with deep love may become homeless from being a king, like king Ashakaranadas. But such an intense love is more valuable than mental stability. I-ness & my-ness' disturbance created by love is not the same as that created by greed / anger / desires. Such a disturbance is a symptom of love, not of mundane emotions. Vigyapties of Shri Gosainji are of this kind.

In Gyanamarg also, such a mental state of intense experience is narrated as an achievement. It is called Paramhansa state or Avadhutacharya. In that a Brahmagyani experiencing divine bliss of Brahman loses awareness about body, family, clothes, hunger/thirst, day/night. A yogi in Samadhi state also becomes isolated this way as per Yogamarg. But then such great followers of these paths or even great lovers in the world like Majnori neither need nor listen to any preaching.

5. FAQs related to The Samarpana Program

Q. This program makes our daily life schedule quite tight such that one always feels stressed & bonded. Life becomes monotonous & without leisure.

A. First of all if this program makes our life disciplined, is it good or bad ? If a newly married man tries to reach home soon in the evening, is it good outcome of marriage or bad? In doing so, if he feels stressed & remains hasty, it is natural. So there is nothing wrong in this program, provided one likes it.

Stress & monotony get in when we become too rigid towards the scale of Seva. If we keep it according to the ability of participating family members, it can be performed with enthusiasm. As the program involves celebration of various festivals & frequent changes according to the change of seasons, monotony need not be felt.

One thing is clear that this program can't be confined just to week-ends. Devotion is duty of our soul, not just the body. If soul can be felt only in the week-end, devotion can be done only then. But it is not so.

Q. This program may be appropriate for villagers but for today's urbanites it is not manageable.

A. In India, cities exist since around last 10,000 years. The 84 vaishnavas include natives of various cities like Jagannathpuri, Patna, Varanasi, Prayag, Kannauj, Agra, Mathura, Godhra, Ahmedabad, Morbi, Lahore, etc. Thus cities were already there & our sect prevailed there later. Then what is new nuisance today ? Is there any one city in the world where lovers do not reside ? Then why a devotee can't reside in a city ? Cities provide a variety of fruits, vegetables & water at an arm's length, thereby saving time. One should spare isolated space & time for devotion as per one's capacity. Tension & stress were quite high in those times compared to today, because the cruel rulers of other religion were themselves involved in crimes such as rapes, conversion, genocides, kidnapping, dacoit, etc. In some regions, situation was worst than even Iraq or Afghanistan of today.

Q. If family members are agnostic, unfit or do not obey religious code of conduct, it becomes difficult to tackle them & Seva both.

A. Such a difficulty was faced by 84 vaishnavas also & followers in future also will have to face it. There can't be a one-time single organized solution for it. Either work hard & get separated or else compromise & live together peacefully. Two separate kitchens can be created in the house or cooking can be done turn by turn. One has to work out the solution at the family level oneself.

Q. How seva should be done when the housewife can't do it for 4 days in a month or the husband goes for frequent outstation travelling as a part of profession ?

A. Just like other responsibilities of the house, both spouses should train themselves to be complementary to & occasionally substitute for each other & live as a team. Husband can learn cooking & get up around an hour early than usual in those 4 days. These days many kitchen appliances are available like fridge, oven, etc. So many of the recipes can be half/full prepared at night or in week-ends. Some instant recipes are also available. Housewife & child can also do so when husband is on a tour.

Q. The program of Samarpana does not seem interesting or appealing to novices or even to those doing Seva since many years.

A. Since last 525 years, riches & poor, children & aged ones, ladies & gents have been enjoying it. So we should think the other way. There is nothing wrong with this proven program, but there might be something wrong with us.

Also, does a seasoned alcoholic stop drinking water just because it is not as appealing as wine? Do wives abandon bald husbands? Do people stop taking dinner at home during week days if they have a habit of dining out during week-ends ? Of course not. So we should abandon craze of getting thrilled or chilled-out in week-ends by participating in readymade religious functions. Instead this program of samarpana should be rigorously practiced on daily basis. We may not proceed at the speed of a hare but we can proceed at least at that of a tortoise. Why not to give a chance to the Lord in this one life to tempt us ?

Q. For minimum how much time Seva should be done daily ?

A. Shri Mahaprabhuji instructs that even a daily wages earner having zero bank-balance should do Seva for at least 3 hours a day. If not individually, as a family together we should get involved in it for that much time. In emergency or during touring, this norm can be relaxed, but not always.

Q. What is the alternative in our sect if one can't manage to get involved in Seva for that much time ?

A. Shri Gopinathji in Sadhanadipika has prescribed program of Pooja based on Vaishnavatantra. This includes 7 of the navadha bhakti i.e. shravana to dasya, but excludes sakhya & atmanivedana. That can be done in less time. It neither requires a disciple to take brahmasambandha diksha nor requires the Lord to be initiated as per ritual of Purushottamapratishtha (i.e. Pushta). The namadiksha i.e. sharana by ashtakshara mantra is sufficient on part of the disciple. Even this program is to be followed at home only.

TO CONCLUDE

In principle, the program of samarpana can be followed in all places at all times. But then a disciple undergoes ups & downs in the life & so comes across many hurdles. Some of them have been stated by Shri Mahaprabhuji in Nibandha e.g. unfit body, repulsion of senses &/or mind, restrictions imposed by others, embarrassment to other family members / neighbors, etc. Some of these hurdles can be dealt with tactfully & one can get re-engaged in Seva. But some may not spare us. In such a situation, Shri Mahaprabhuji prescribes some alternatives which can ensure that devotion sustains in spite of downsizing or abandonment of the program of samarpana.

Let us understand one such alternative. It shall enlighten Shri Mahaprabhuji's vision. If our worshipping at home becomes embarrassing to other family members or neighbors, Shri Mahaprabhuji suggests daily worshipping in a Shunyadevalaya. i.e. one should carry with him/her the Lord as also the offerings, etc. & go to an isolated place (like a deserted remaining of an ancient temple) nearby the home, perform Seva there & return home with all belongings as also the Lord. The motive here is to provide isolation that is essential for love, which is the soul of devotion. If at home one can get such an isolation + vast facility, in Shunyadevalaya one shall get isolation + less facility. But as long as isolation is available for devotion, Shri Mahaprabhuji is optimistic about progress of the disciple by falling in love with the Lord. Shri Mahaprabhuji consoles by stating that one should practice as per one's eligibility; doing at a big scale or a small scale is not significant.

Now look. We boast ourselves as the followers of the path of love, but fail to understand what Shri Mahaprabhuji tries to explain in such a simple manner, that experiencing bliss of love or even fun essentially requires isolation. Not only do the collegian lovebirds know it but even group of naughty children playing in a closed room forcefully request elders trying to enter the room to leave them alone & let them play, thereby maintaining isolation. While we foolishly keep on inaugurating one public temple after another & dwell there in bulk for a momentary darshan & feel as if it is an achievement ! Is it a way to love? Shri Mahaprabhuji asks us to go to Shunyadevalaya in case there is trouble at home, while the temple-keepers invite us to go there! This is not a superficial contradiction; it is a digression. The commercial temples' keepers are not blood cells but cancerous cells in the body of our sect & so quite harmful.

Any way. In short, love is like the head while the program of samarpana is like the rest of the body. If conducive situation is available at home or even at a deserted nearby temple, love for the Lord will definitely grow. The inability to perfectly adhere to the program of samarpana might not come in the way.

So at the end I shall quote one statement of Shri Mahaprabhuji. Though it is incomplete here & quoted here without referring to the context in which it is made, it perfectly expresses the essence of the program of samarpana & so is my favorite. There are many quotes related to the program, of many acharyas & even the Lord. But if someone asks me to explain the program in one sentence, I shall select this one :

Yen syat nirvritih chitte tat krishne sadhayed dhruvam

That which shall definitely make you happy on offering to the Lord ShriKrishna should definitely be offered to Him.

Jay ShriKrishna.